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On the Banks of the Resor

The Man Behind the Magazine

Sixth Edition
Thirty-Second Thousand

C. B. Keenleyside

Author of "The Power and Glory of Prayer," "Daily Walks with God,"
and "What Is Your Life?"

ON THE BANKS OF THE BESOR

OR

THE MAN BEHIND THE BAGGAGE

BY

C. B. KEENLEYSIDE

*Author of "The Upper and the Nether Springs," "Enoch Walked
With God," "What Is Your Life?"
and "The Unseen."*

[SIXTH EDITION, THIRTY-SECOND THOUSAND]

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to Thee."—LIVINGSTONE.

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ON THE BANKS OF THE BESOR

OR,

THE MAN BEHIND THE BAGGAGE.

(1 SAMUEL 30:24.)

I.

"God spake, and gave us the word to keep ;
Bade never fold the hands, nor sleep
'Mid a faithless world—at watch and ward,
Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.
By His servant Moses the watch was set ;
Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet."
—BROWNING.

PERHAPS the darkest day in David's life was the one upon which he and his six hundred men stood by the ruins of Ziklag, while their wives and children were prisoners to the Amalekites. David and the people "wept until they had no more power to weep," but to him it was a day of peculiar trial, for "the people spake of stoning him." In a fit of despair he had

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turned his back on God and fled to the Philistines, and by murder, robbery and deceit, he had for months obtained his living. He had been having his own way, and this, facing death by stoning, is what came of it. Truly:

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man;
But the end thereof are the ways of death."

and—

"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways."

He was at his wits' end; and, after all, it was not a bad place at which to be. Where man's wits end God's wisdom begins.

God had to bring David very low to reclaim him. Look at him as he stands before the smouldering embers of Ziklag. Country, home, family, property, name, leadership gone—and his very followers turning with hate and lowering brows to stone him. Surely Jehovah had swept with the "besom of destruction."

Have you ever been at Ziklag? God often brings His wandering and self-willed children there, and if your steps are tending away from God look out, you are taking the road to Ziklag.

And now we read—and mark it well—and go thou and do likewise whoever thou art, standing by the ruins of Ziklag: "But David strengthened

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himself in Jehovah, his God." This is the pivot. Ziklag did it. David has made a right about face. Henceforth he sings :

"Show me thy ways, O Jehovah :
Teach me thy paths.
Guide me in thy truth and teach me ;
For thou art the God of my salvation ;
Thee do I wait all the day."

Calling for the ephod, he inquired of Jehovah, and was told to pursue, and was assured that he would overtake the enemy and recover all.

So David went, he and his six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men ; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor."

With his four hundred men David came upon the enemy—"Spread abroad over all the ground eating and drinking and dancing—and David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken away."

Returning to the brook Besor: "David came to the two hundred men, who were so faint that they could not follow . . . then answered all the wicked men and base fellows of those that went with David, and said, because they went not with us we will not give them aught of the spoil."

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But David made answer: "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the baggage: they shall share alike."

And it became a law in Israel unto this day.

II.

"My Jesus, my King, my Life, my All, I again dedicate my whole self to thee." —DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

NOW David's greater son has entered upon a campaign which has for its aim to save the race. The great hinderer has robbed, lied to, and carried off as prisoners hundreds of millions of the human family. "Jehovah's flock is taken captive." Jesus has gone forth to the rescue and a great battle is on. All who name the name of Christ are born into the fight. There is no enlisting in Christ's army beyond the acceptance of salvation. Upon all of us the honour of the campaign rests. Upon each of us the command is binding. "Go ye, and preach." The universal enlistment of all believers at conversion into the army of the Captain of the Lord's Hosts, once fairly grasped

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solves for us many a vexed question. The advancement of the campaign is not one of the things we should be interested in. It is the only thing for which we were created. It ought to be the ruling principle of our lives. All things else should subserve it. For this purpose too, were we redeemed. And in this great campaign there are no neutrals, for Jesus himself said: "He that gathereth not with me scattereth."

Although the command, "Go ye into all the world," was given so many centuries ago, there are still one thousand million non-Christians in the world. And this appalling condition exists because we have not had true views of our place in the fight. We have looked upon mission work, as work which men did who were specially called of God, and toward which it was a pious thing to contribute some small part of our surplus means. But we have never realized that it was a fight into which we were to put ourselves and all God gave us. The idea that it is as much the duty of every Christian to be entirely in the campaign as it was the duty of Livingstone, Paton, Moffat, Mackay, Clough, Brainard, Taylor, Hart, Judson and a cloud of others, has not dawned on us, and so the centuries have told the dreary tale of failure, and

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two-thirds of the race have not yet heard the sweet story of Christ.

Our efforts have been as though one tried to drive an ocean liner by unfurling a 'kerchief to the breeze, or to hurl the Imperial Limited thundering across the continent fed by a handful of kindling, or to drive the midnight gloom from New York with a tallow dip.

"But would you have us all go out as foreign missionaries?" some one asks. By no means. Some have to stay on the Besor to protect the baggage. Some are not strong enough to go, some are too old or too burdened.

Whether our place is at the front, or by the baggage, whether we stand on the firing line, or guard the supplies, we ought to be wholly, unreservedly, out and out in the campaign, body, soul and baggage.

If our place is by the baggage our duty is well seen by studying the conduct of David's two hundred men on the Besor.

1. They were by the baggage from dire need, not from choice. Over and over again it is stated that they were too weary to cross the brook. Probably the keenest in the chase, they had over-taxed their strength and could not go over; and you know God says, on another occasion, to David, "Whereas it was in thine

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heart . . . thou didst well." He looks at the will, and holds us to account for what we have, and in no wise for what we have not. We are responsible for our own time, talents and wealth, and for no other.

But if we are by the baggage from choice, and not from need, and if God's choice for us is in the battle, let us gird on our armour and quick march. There is no other way that is safe. Yes, and while hundreds of millions are Christless and His command has not been cancelled, then surely the burden of proof is on each soul to show that God has not called to the battle.

Christ, the Royal Master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle
See his banners go

2. David's two hundred men were not by the baggage for selfish ends, but as guards and stewards, and their work, though less exciting, was no less important. Would that this idea of stewardship might take firm rooting in the minds of the Christian men and women of Canada. It would solve our troubles and lighten our burdens. God says He owns the earth, and the fulness thereof, the beasts of the forests, the cattle upon a thousand hills, the

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birds of the mountains, the wild beasts of the field, the silver and the gold.

But men do not agree with God. Men say, one to the other, This is *my* house, these are *my* herds, *my* flocks; this is *my* silver and *my* gold.

Like Pharoah they say (Ezekiel 29:3), "My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."

"They boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, They call their lands after their own names."—Ps. 49.

Nevertheless, man owns nothing. God owns everything. Solomon was never wiser than when he said (1 Chron. 29:16), "O Jehovah our God, all this store that we have . . . cometh of thy hand, and is all thine own."

Now, God's supreme desire earthward is to save mankind; for this He gave His only begotten Son. Then, does it not follow that whatever God gives us of His material things, be it much or little, it is for the express and only object of advancing the purpose for which He gave His Son. Can you conceive of God giving His children wealth, great or small, for any other purpose?

Faithful or unfaithful, willing or unwilling, true or false, we are stewards. We own nothing—not even our souls. Let us beware then, that

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we do not embezzle God's wealth. How shocked we are to read of a bank manager in a post of trust defrauding others of their rightful property; but what shall we say of ourselves, robbing God, and what will God say? We know that He said to the men of old: "Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

No man can be on the banks of the Besor who does not look upon himself simply as God's steward.

Pope Pius IV., on hearing of Calvin's death, exclaimed: "Ah, the strength of that proud heretic lay in this—that riches and honor were nothing to him. With a few such men our Church would soon be mistress of both shores of the ocean."

It was in this spirit, too, that John Wesley wrote:

"Blest with the scorn of finite good
My soul is lightened of its load,
And seeks the things above.
No thing on earth I call my own."

3. David's two hundred men when they came into possession of the baggage did not set about building for themselves gorgeous palaces. They

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kept right on, humbly living in their tents. What was good enough for the men in the field was good enough for them. The domestic help problem, which bulks so large in these modern days, was solved for them by the simplicity of their lives.

What do we find in our ranks by the baggage? As God gives men wealth they usually move out of their modest dwellings into finer and more fashionably situated brown-stone fronts. They pitch toward Sodom. Their children pitch into Sodom, get false ideas of life, and are usually caught in the whirl and drift away from their father's God. "Shalt thou reign because thou strivest to excel in cedar?"

Now, instead of this, as a Christian's wealth grows, after providing all helpful comforts and all possible intellectual advantages for his children, and all needed capital for his business, suppose he were to maintain his wonted simplicity of life, and devote not a tenth of the increase, but all of the increase, to Christ's campaign, would he not be doing his simple duty as God's steward, and save his children from a thousand snares? In the majority of cases inherited wealth is an inherited curse. How can it be otherwise, embezzled as it often is, from our Master's war chest?

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4. Again, David's two hundred men did not hold a dress parade, and put upon their heads and backs the wealth needed for the campaign, nor waste the baggage in useless and ridiculous personal adornment. The same useful campaigning suits worn by the men at the front were good enough for the men on the Besor.

But what do we find? You may go into any city Church in Canada on Easter Sunday—the day which marks the greatest of all events—and find more wealth invested in superfluous, in-artistic and often ridiculous headgear, than that entire Church gives to missions. Is this campaigning on the Besor?

A religious paper tells of a woman who saves the Church in which she worships God \$10,000 a year. She is wealthy and cultured, and by her scrupulous simplicity of dress throws the influence of the entire congregation against the extravagance and tyranny of ever-changing fashion. May the good Lord add to her numbers daily such as shall be known for their moderation and simplicity.

5. Nor were their tables spread with extravagant dainties, brought at infinite cost from all over the world. As the fighters fed so fed the weary guards upon the baggage.

Walking down Broadway one day the writer

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saw some abnormally large grapes in a window, and went in to get a basket to take home. To his question as to price, the clerk replied : "Five dollars a pound." In amazement he asked, "Why, who buy such expensive fruit?"

"The people up Fifth Avenue," quickly answered the clerk. "They gladly pay twice that much to get them first. It shows their wealth."

It shows their wealth. And this is life !

6. It is a question, too, if the risks the fighters ran were one whit greater than the risks taken by the campers on the Besor. Had the Amalakites learned of David's pursuit and made a detour, doubling back a few miles, they would have come upon this little guard of wornout soldiers and slain them to a man.

In fact, they shared alike all through the campaign, and surely, then, it was just that they should share alike in the spoils of the day of triumph.

So long as there is one human being who has not heard of Jesus, so long as one immortal soul has not been offered immortality in Christ, our place is at the front or on the Besor. While the day is yet in the future when every knee shall bow to Christ, we who have been, by the new birth, born into the war, have no right

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to spend a needless dollar, or pander to our ease, greed or love of display by the selfish use of the baggage. It is the baggage of the army, and sorely needed in the war.

III.

If once all the lamps that are lighted
Should steadily blaze in a line,
Wide over the land and the ocean,
What a girdle of glory would shine.
How all the dark places would brighten,
How the mists would roll up and away,
How the earth would laugh out in its gladness
To hail the millennial day.

TO-DAY, as of old, there sits One over against the treasury who notes the gifts cast therein; and He has, what to us is, a curious system of mathematics. His reckoning defies all our rules; for with Him two and two do not make four, neither is a penny less than a pound. According to His arithmetic, two mites, about one-quarter of a cent in value, are more than the great gifts cast into the treasury by the rich. Comparing the widow's quarter cent and the rich man's great gift, he says: "They all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her

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want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. She was on the Besor. They were not.

Applying to our time the same system of arithmetic, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, how He must reverse the judgments of earth. Men reckon gifts by their size, God reckons them by what it costs to give. Not the amount given, but the amount left, is what God looks at. This is why the quarter cent was more than the great gifts—they were given out of superfluity—it out of want.

With poetic insight, true to the heart of things, we sing with Isaac Watts:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my *all*."

And then we dole out our dollars, or it may be our dimes, and flatter ourselves that we have done our duty.

Or, again, with the heavenly souled Havergal, we sing:

"Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold."

And then, true to the second, but false to the first, line we hand out our "mites," but we put

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our silver and our gold in bonds and stocks, in vaults of steel with a double-time lock. And this we do in spite of the fact that our plain duty is thus set forth by Paul: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted the being on an equality with God, not a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself."

Oh, how far we are from having the mind of Christ. He thought the being on an equality with God not a thing to be grasped when weighed with human redemption. But we grasp, even with a dying clutch, the baubles of this world regardless of the millions who are perishing.

Here are a few examples that have come under the writer's personal notice of men and women who are to-day living on the Beasor. And alongside of these are sketched, by way of comparison, the lives of others who have not caught the inspiration and who do not so live.

These sketches are given in all love and charity and with malice toward none. As most of those referred to are living, the names are, for obvious reasons, withheld.

In London there are women whose husbands are earning moderate wages, and able to keep their wives and children in humble comfort. Yet

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these women are so filled with the love of Christ, and so long that the good news may spread to their less fortunate sisters, that they go out as charwomen to earn money to give to missions. Over the washboard and mop they bend, mingling prayers and labor for the coming of the Kingdom. What if they only earn a few dollars a year, He who sits over against the treasury notes it all, and by His table of arithmetic their gifts are greater than the hundreds—even thousands—cast in by those who only know they give by seeing their names on bank cheques.

"How can I give so as to feel it?" said a wealthy man to the writer.

Christ answered a somewhat similar question one day when He said: "Sell that which thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come, follow me."

In a certain city of Canada lives a man nearing by force of years the Hereafter. He has neither kith nor kin, but is rich in earthly things. His life has gone in storing up money. His wealth is large, and his time is short. Now, as the days draw near for leaving that for which his life has been given, he is sadly puzzled, and the question that occurs and recurs, and will not down, is this: "What shall I do with my money?" Obviously it is no use in the world

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to come, for over there the streets are paved with gold, and of course no one would care to take paving stones as personal luggage. And then—and then, there is an embargo on it in the Home of the Undefiled. It is contraband; and so he cannot take it across, even if he would.

In answer to his question, "What shall I do?" the writer once said to him: "Put away enough to keep you as long as you can hope to live. Never mind the interest, live on the principal. Then invest the rest of your fortune in bonds, and permanently endow as many mission stations as the interest will permit. While you live you can correspond with the men on these stations, and, if well enough, visit them, and when no longer within reach of letters, you can still receive tidings of the good being done, and through eternity thousands of ransomed souls will greet you whose places would be empty, humanly speaking, but for you. Is that not an entrancing vision?"*

* Since giving this advice the writer believes it to have been unsound. The King's business requires haste, and our duty is to reach our own generation quickly, and this, too, is the surest way to reach the generations to come. Better results could be obtained from a straight gift for immediate use than from an endowment. Endowments are too slow, the devil is too active, life is too short, hell is too sure.

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He thought a moment, and said: "Yes, but who can I trust?"

"Trust? Why, trust God," and the subject dropped. And he still wonders what to do with his money—the money for which he gave his life.

He is not on the banks of the Besor.

In the same city lives a girl who is out at service. By dint of economy she had saved fifty dollars, and had decided to buy for herself a fur coat, but becoming filled with the spirit of David's two hundred men on the Besor, she went one day to her pastor, and told him her intentions, and added: "But I have changed my mind, and here are forty dollars for a missionary, and I will buy a coat with the balance." And now, as she turns in weary, but happy, at night, she has a substitute in India who turns out to do his share of work for the Master.

She is on the Besor.

Here is a scene in a rich man's office. Years of selfish living have left its mark on his face and his bank account. He is wealthy, hard, and unhappy. His coachman costs him more than his loyalty to Christ.

He does not dwell on the Besor.

His caller is a widow, who, for thirty years or more, has been giving her life for others. Her

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days tell such a tale of love, faith and self-sacrifice as few other lives in all the ages have ever told. Though not rich, she is a multi-millionaire. Though passing through affliction and sorrow she dwelt ever in the secret place of the Most High, and so there is a soft light in her eyes, and a heavenly radiance in her face, for she lives within earshot of the airs that are played on the delectable mountains.

She has been these many years tenting on the Besor.

If we drew near we could hear the rich man say with a sigh:

"I wish I were as happy as you are."

Not long ago the writer was discussing missions with a man who had recently inherited a large estate, putting him beyond the dream of avarice. Curious enough, as his bank account grew his nature failed to respond. There was, in fact, an inverse ratio of expansion. Referring to a couple of special calls for missions, he said as his hands went into his pockets in panic, almost to the elbows: "It is a caution how we have been drained of late."

Soon after it transpired that his suffering, strange to say, was purely of a sympathetic nature. He was being "drained" by proxy, and it hurt him to see others give. So sensitive

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had his purse become that when other purses
opened his purse was jarred.

Needless to say he resides not on the Besor.

" I looked upon a sea,
And lo ! 'twas dead,
Although by Hermon's snows
And Jordan fed.

" How came a fate so dire ?
The tale's soon told :
All that it got it kept,
And fast did hold.

" All tributary streams
Found here their grave,
Because this sea received
But never gave.

" O sea that's dead ! teach me
To know and feel
That selfish grasp and greed
My doom will seal.

" And, Lord, help me my best,
Myself to give,
That I may others bless,
And, like thee, live."

In the country not many miles away lives a
farm laborer who earns eighteen dollars a month
for five months, and twenty dollars a month for

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the rest of the year. Henry Gibbud's little tract "How I Work Twenty-Four Hours a Day," fell into his hands, telling how for twenty-five dollars a year one could support a native preacher in China, India or Africa, under such men as Dr. Kilborn, Bishop Thoburn, Dr. Clough and Andrew Murray. He became interested, and sent money for a substitute to Africa. Soon after this he sent money for a second one, saying he had been greatly blessed since sending the first. He wrote: "I am a stingy man for heaven, so nearly all I made last year is laid up there in God's bank that will never break." In two years he has sent money for five workers—one hundred and sixty dollars.

He is on the Besor—and intends staying until Christ shall relieve his guard.

Let no one fancy that they only who have little or no share of this world's goods are on the Besor, for quite the contrary is the case. Many men who have been trusted by the Owner with large shares of His wealth are true to the trust, and administer these possessions as faithful stewards.

In a Canadian city is a wealthy manufacturer who placed himself and his possessions entirely at God's disposal many years ago. At that time he decided that his remaining days, as God

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should see fit to prolong them, and all his profits should be given for the advancement of the Kingdom. Always a philanthropist, he has for nearly a score of years given practically his entire time to helping the sick, the unfortunate, and the aged, and to other active duties in the great war being waged by "Jesus who is called Christ." Not long ago a man in his confidence informed the writer that although his business had doubled in volume, and his earnings had kept pace—nevertheless he was a poorer man to-day than he was fifteen years ago.

He was speaking after the manner of men. The man in question is not poorer to-day than he was fifteen years ago. The wealth he has given away is the wealth he possesses. What has gone to aged people's homes, mission churches, and to the thousand and one things at home and abroad, to which he has contributed, is now laid up where "moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." It is his for eternity.

Ah, that wealthy Christians could see this. What they give is what they save, and what they save is what they lose.

A rich man dies, and men say, one to the other, "How much was he worth?"

After a while the will is probated, and the

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papers say he was worth one, two, or five hundred thousand dollars.

But that is wrong. That is what he was not worth. He was worth when he died only what he had used in the war. What stood in his name when life ended was what he lost.

IV.

"Behold the midnight glory,
Worlds on world's amazing pomp !
Redouble this amaze. Ten thousand add.
Add twice ten thousand more—
Then weigh the soul. One soul
Outweighs them all."

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, in making his Budget speech in 1897, said that the value of the cigar and cigarette stubs thrown away annually in Great Britain amounted to one and a quarter million pounds, which was more than the entire amount given by the Christians of Great Britain for Foreign missions, and it is but fair to assume that the same ratio holds in Canada; that is to say, more money is thrown into the gutters in cigar and cigarette stubs than is given to obey Christ's command, "Go ye."

On the Banks of the Besor, or

In the United States last year, 1902, the amount spent for chewing gum was \$10,000,000, which is more than the entire amount spent during the same period by that wealthy and Christian nation on Foreign Missions; and still there are those that tell us that missions are "draining" the churches.

The Epworth Leagues of the London Conference of the Methodist Church averaged thirty-two cents per member last year to missions; that is to say, the price of three good cigars—a moderate smoker's allowance per day—or the price of three ice creams, with two cent a year to the good.

In David's day two hundred men were by the baggage and four hundred in the battle. That is, two were in the battle for every one by the baggage.

In our day seventeen thousand missionaries only have gone down to the battle while five hundred millions stay by the baggage. Represented by figures this is how it stands, as 1 is to 10000, so David's army was to Christ's.

And yet the writer has no hesitation in saying that any two hundred men by the baggage could keep four hundred men at the front, if they would put themselves as completely in the campaign as say Paton in the New Hebrides,

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Livingstone in Africa, Thoburn and Clough in India, Murray in Africa, or any other group of men in foreign service.

The writer made this statement at a summer school for the study of missions not long ago, and his hearers looked politely dubious.

Well, why not?

Should any one want evidence of what God can do with a surrendered life, let him read the story of Herbie Bellamy, the cripple lad of Moose Jaw, Assiniboia. Unable to talk, walk, or use his hands, he was, however, so truly in the Lord's hands that he was able to support and educate a Japanese boy, and ultimately to build the "Herbie Bellamy Orphanage," in Kanazawa, and aid largely in its support. They say he only lived twelve years as we count time, and yet in that short time he set in motion currents of inspiration which will flow while time—say rather while eternity—shall last. He lives to-day in the lives of hundreds all over America whose faith and zeal have been stirred by his strong and beautiful life. He is one of those

"Who live again

In minds made better by their presence : live
In pulses stirred to generosity, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,

So to live is heaven :

To make undying music in the world."

On the Banks of the Besor, or

We are so often like Elisha, who, returning from bidding adieu to his great teacher, Elijah, stood on the banks of the Jordan, and as that swift stream poured its waters down its rocky channel, blocking his way, exclaimed: "Where is the God of Elijah?"

Where, indeed, is the God of Elijah?

Reader, the God of Elijah is here. He is here as these words are written; He is there, with you, as they are read; He is the living God, the God that changes not, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The God of Elijah was the God of Muller and Livingstone, and Bellamy, and He is the God of Hudson Taylor and John G. Paton and of every other man who has accepted his leadership from the dawn of the race. and will be until time shall be no more.

Wiser would it be to change the question and ask, "Where is God's Elijah?" Elijah, by his faith and consecration turned the nation from idolatry to God. Oh, that the Master of all the ages would send us another Elijah to turn the Church from mammon to God, from Earthly to Heavenly riches!

the Man Behind the Baggage.

V.

"The best of all we do and are
Just God forgive."

—WORDSWORTH.

THE Church has never lacked for men willing to preach the Gospel, and by doing so give up all hope of earthly possessions and human preferment. Why then should it be thought a thing incredible that men could be found willing, in like manner, to dedicate their time, power and brains in the so-called secular pursuits to the sole object of advancing the Kingdom of God. Let the lawyer, the doctor, the merchant, the manufacturer, the inventor, the artisan, the mechanic, the laborer, abiding each in his calling, lay himself and his talents on the altar for the glory of Jesus Christ in the evangelization of the world. Let him look upon his work as a call from God, and place his surplus revenue, after a modest and simple living be provided, upon the altar for carrying out God's plans for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. Let even a modest two hundred do so, and who can forecast the outcome? Verily, "The earth would laugh out in its gladness to hail the millennial day."

On the Banks of the Besor, or

Ah, yes, but what about old age? and what about providing for our children?

Concerning old age, God will be no man's debtor; and if you will dare to take God at His word and obey the Master's plain commands in the Sermon on the Mount, well—old age, if it should come will have no terrors for you.

And as for laying up money for your children: Gideon's gold became a snare to himself "and to his family," and so it has ever been. Poverty has slain its thousands, but wealth has slain its tens of thousands. Paul's escort to Rome were not the last to be lured to ruin by the softly blowing south wind, and the miracle is as great to-day as ever, if even one camel goes through the needle's eye. Laying up wealth for children is a doubtful kindness, but storing it in the vaults of heaven is insuring blessings untold on parent and children in time and eternity. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," was Christ's command. What do you make of it? Did He mean it? If not, why did He not say what He did mean?

—But, Lord, to-morrow!

Did I not die for Thee?

Do I not live for Thee? Leave me to-morrow.

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VI.

"Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by-and-by."

IMAGINE for a moment that morning when the man on the look-out passed the word to the two hundred, that a dust cloud on the horizon portended the approach of an army with spoils. And then think of the joy of that reunion, when wives and children were restored as from the tomb. And watch their faces as David gives sentence: "As his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the baggage; they shall share alike."

Just so Christ is coming back some day, back in triumph from the war, back to the men on the Besor, back to unite the sundered and divide the spoils.

"And soon He'll come in glory,
The hour is drawing nigh ;
Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by and by."

Will it not be glorious in that day, so to have lived that we may hear Christ say: "As

On the Banks of the Besor, or

his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the baggage. They shall share alike."

How sadly we misapply the term "far-seeing." In our common usage it is applied to men who so forecast the future as to gather to themselves more of the baggage than their fellows. The size of their baggage heap is the measure of their shrewdness; and the man who has no baggage has no brains. This is the standard of the world—and too often of the Church.

But how false it is.

The truly far-seeing man projects everything forward, far beyond the bounds of this little life into the light of that day when Jesus shall return in triumph, to judge the quick and the dead. Let us live thus, and let us do nothing of which we shall be ashamed when Jesus comes, nothing to bar us from sharing in David's great law: "As his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the baggage."

John G. Paton has this striking passage in his autobiography: "Life, any life, would be well spent, under any conceivable conditions, in bringing one human soul to know, and love, and serve God and His Son, and thereby securing for yourself, at least one temple, where your

the Man Behind the Baggage.

name and memory would be held forever and forever in affectionate praise—a regenerated heart in heaven. That fame will prove immortal when all the poems, and monuments and pyramids of earth have gone to dust."

VII.

"The only way to get rid of a past is by getting a future out of it."—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

THE writer has been at Ziklag, and this is how it came about.

Ten years ago, when a student at Yale, he was appointed by the men of Victoria University, Toronto, to go to Japan.

Soon after that he became unwell with a trouble which grew chronic, and was compelled to recall his acceptance of the post.

And now began a series of bitter years. Rebellious and chafing at what seemed mysterious providences, he allowed his sufferings to harden and to drive him away from the Master, until one day he pulled down his flag in the face of the enemy, and, like Ephraim, being armed, turned back in the day of battle.

Then followed six dark years of "having his

On the Banks of the Besor, or

own way," until Ziklag was reached. But thank God it was reached, with all its grim details.

From Ziklag the road runs straight to the brook Besor, where, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, he means to stay until Jesus comes, or calls.

For those who cannot go down to the battle, it is the most glorious camping ground in all the world.

"I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside ;
I have heard the voice of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied."

VIII.

"God's men, in God's place, doing God's work, in God's way."

HOW I should rejoice to see a multitude camped on the banks of the Besor for the glory of the Lord.

The other night I had a vision and this is how it ran: All along the slopes were tents and the tents were temples of the Holy Ghost, and in them dwelt not wrecks and failures, not dregs and remnants, but a strong, clear eyed, pure souled throng, having life with all its

the Man Behind the Baggage.

boundless possibilities before them. And they were there on the Besor in charge of the baggage not for personal glory or aggrandizement but to provide for the wants of a still larger host which had gone down to the front under the banner of King Emmanuel.

And I saw another vision. This time it was the larger host, engaged in the battle all along the firing line, and they were overcoming the enemy, because of the "blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their life unto death."

And ever and anon couriers went from the host on the Besor to the army at the front, bearing the needed supplies, and they who were in the fight had never a care about temporal things for the Lord God Himself through His men and women on the Besor supplied every need of theirs.

And again I saw that the incense of prayer unceasingly arose, night and day, from the tents on the Besor on behalf of those who were in the dark places of the earth and out on the lonely pickets.

In answer to these prayers the Captain of the Lord's Hosts with His invisible and invincible forces stood shoulder to shoulder with the troops in the fight, and the "arms of their hands were

On the Banks of the Besor, or

made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

Are you going to the front? If so, God speed you.

If you cannot go to the front, are you on the banks of the Besor?

There is no other place so glorious, no air so bracing, no outlook so entrancing, no other flowers are half so fragrant as those that bloom on the Besor, no other song birds sing so sweetly, nowhere else on earth is walking with God so vivid and real, and the fellowship with Jesus so heavenly.

IX.

"Call unto Me and I will answer thee."—JER. 33 : 3.

WHEN trooper Brace—now a Methodist clergyman in British Columbia—embarked at Halifax for South Africa, with the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, a little seven year old girl threw her arms about his neck and said: "I won't forget you, I will pray for you every day, and God will take care of you and bring you back again."

.

A few months later the terrible carnage at Harts River took place, and the six survivors

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out of a troop of forty were making a last desperate stand on the side of a little copje. Sixty to six was the ratio and the Boer bullets were flying fast and deadly. Two more Canadians fell, one on either side of trooper Brace, reducing the force to four. And as they crouched behind the rocks with the Boer bullets singing dirges overhead, the trooper snatched a moment, while his rifle cooled, to open his Bible, and these were the words he read :

"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

Back in Halifax just then, as the Boer bullets were splintering the rocks in search for billets, little Lulu Crofts was sleeping after praying to God for her trooper; and as she slept her father heard her cry out in great distress, and hurrying to her side found her with the tears streaming from her eyes. Said she: "Oh, father, I have had such a terrible dream about Mr. Brace. I saw him down there behind the rocks and the Boers were all around him, trying to shoot him." And then she laughed and said: "But it is all right now, father, for I saw the angels all around him—and over his head—lots of them—and the Boers cannot touch him."

On the Banks of the Besor

Now little Lulu Crofts could not go down to the front, but she could pray, and how much the safety of trooper Brace depended on her prayers only God knows. And if God in answer to a wee girl's prayer would give His angels charge over trooper Brace, fighting his country's battles on the African velt, will He not answer your prayers for the advance guard fighting under the banner of the Cross?

Oh, for an army of Lulu Crofts.

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